

# RICHARD SERRA MIX

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE SCULPTURE?  
YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE PART OF A SHOW EXAMINING ISSUES OF ART IN  
PUBLIC PLACES / 'AFTER TILTED ARC' STOREFRONT FOR ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE 51 PRINCE ST. NOV 1-24 1985 / BILL AND MARY BUCHEN /85  
Interviews recorded at Federal Plaza on October 11, 12:00 pm, 1985

FILE:  
TILTED ARC/BUCHEN.

Yeah, i like it...me gusto...beautiful  
i didn't know it was a sculpture  
there's nothing much to look at you know  
that's a sculpture?  
is it a piece of sculpture i had no idea that's what it was...  
i thought it was a temporary wall for construction..i thought they  
were doing something...building something behind it...cut the wind  
i don't like it  
it should be painted..... it's a good idea.....(to keep the wind away)  
conceptually it's wonderful  
i have a sore throat  
i'd rather not say, a piece of rusty metal  
we don't have any opinion  
it's a horror....it was placed in my front yard without my consultation  
or approval.  
it's a very lovely sculpture....i like it personally  
i don't like any group of people placing themselves outside the  
mainstream of society, i don't like artists telling me that because  
they're artists they know more about art than i do because my  
question to you is what defines an artist?...i could be an artist  
tomorrow...  
looks like a hound dog peed on it  
i don't think it's as offensive as the media has portrayed it to be...the  
sculpture itself makes a statement just as well as any other Calder or  
other massive steel structure that they've been putting up all over the  
country.  
i thought it was a boat  
it's a hunk of metal just laying here in the middle of this poor plaza  
it's terrible, it's like a piece of junk  
This, the wall? i really have no opinion, this is the first time i've seen  
it.  
i think it stinks  
it's a piece of metal in the middle of the square period...it has no grace  
i am an architect and it really offends my sense of design.  
i think it's kind of wasteful.... now that we no longer have firing  
squads, i can't see any reason for the wall.  
the sooner they move it the better  
not when it interferes with other activities  
looks like a discarded boat..ship  
i think there should be sculpture everywhere, but i think this is really  
poorly placed.  
it's difficult to suspect your anonymous  
it didn't take too much imagination  
from what i read it's supposed to represent the working people...and i  
don't want that to represent me.  
was it always spotted,,, its filthy dirty and ugly  
i like it, it's got a great sense of scale, i hope it stays here  
i think the structure should stay here, it's lovely, it's absolutely  
magnificent,,,it's a lovely contrast to the circular inlay stones... it tilts  
and gives you a comfort to walk into the building...it's a comforting  
feeling to approach it from there...i wonder what Thomas Paine would  
think..... we have no right to dictate to an artist what he should or  
shouldn't do.  
i like the lines but i really don't like the rust it makes me kind of sad  
its kind of an oppressive color.  
insignificant, i don't think it's very good...it's blocking the building  
i thought it was a piece of art but it looks like a big metal out of the  
sky that fell through...i don't dislike it , it just seems to be there  
i never even knew it was a sculpture, i thought it was hiding  
something back there, looks like a rusted metal wall.  
looks like a wall to me  
sculpture of what? it looks like a rusted wall  
awful structure, needs to be removed, i think it should be removed

A very faint, large watermark-like image of a classical building's facade is visible in the background. The building features four prominent Corinthian columns supporting a triangular pediment. The entire image is heavily faded, giving it a light gray, almost ethereal appearance.

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## A MODEST PROPOSAL REGARDING TILTED ARC

Whether the piece stays or goes, the controversy has already altered the work in one crucial way; the Arc's rigorous objecthood has been dissolved, and it has become symbol, a process as destructive, perhaps, to the artist's intentions as its threatened removal. The phenomenal reality of the Arc, its resistant inertia, has been overcome, and its blankness reads now as a metaphor for the mutual alienation of artist and audience, its impassivity and impassibility figure the gulf between elite and mass taste. On the basis of this transformation, perhaps, the "mythology" that could mediate the Arc to the public might be devised, for there is no other basis. As a symbol of the irreconcilability of their desires, the Arc may be able to possess a common meaning for both artist and public, elite and mass audience.

So, a modest proposal. I once saw a guidebook to the monuments of ancient Greece, which had grainy color photographs, and the usual explanatory text, but its distinctive feature was the transparencies that fit over the plates; each showed an artist's reconstruction of the depicted structure, thus allowing the traveller to replace, by imagination, the ruin before him with an image of the original. For those, then, who have condemned the Arc as an eyesore, who have lamented the vistas it obstructs, I offer, in a spirit not wholly ironic, a palliative: photographs of the Arc, keyed to popular seating possibilities, with transparent overlays which would, when in place, restore the scene to its pre-Arc state. Looking on the actual view, the spectator could experience a dematerialization of the Arc analogous to the transformation of it into symbol wrought by the controversy, while the continuing presence of tons of rusted steel would allow the spectator to share something of the pathos of the artist, whose own desire (for a receptive public) can be consummated, likewise, only in imagination.



OLD BRIDGES  
PASSING TIME  
BOILERS  
POWDER  
RUST STAINS  
STEEL  
STRUCTURES  
URBAN  
DECAY  
COLD  
STURDY  
INDUSTRIAL  
RUSTING  
AGING  
SHELTERS  
HARD  
DOORWAYS  
BRITTLE  
BEAMS  
SHINY  
STRONG  
DECAY  
CORROSION  
MELTING  
SOFT  
MALLEABLE  
HIGH RISE  
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MILITARY  
DESTRUCTION  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
TECHNOLOGY  
CAPITALISM  
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CONFINEMENT  
RIGID  
SLAB  
PRISON  
MACHINERY  
BARRIER  
FENCE  
VEHICLE  
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Project: "After Tilted Arc"

Sponsor: Storefront for Art and Architecture  
Glen Weiss, Kyong Park, Tom Finkelpearl

Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc" has stimulated much thought and controversy. Sponsored by GSA, this site specific work was installed at Federal Plaza in New York City.

This is an attempt to understand the negative reaction which caused it's eventual removal.

I initially perceived that the cause of the public outcry was a reaction to the material Cor Ten Steel, I have had similiar reactions to my own work such as Oxidizing Holes: Site 1, in rusting steel. (ON  
TILTED  
ARC)

As a test I asked a random sample of people what comes to mind when describing Cor Ten Steel. The words tell the story.

STEEL STRUCTURES URBAN DECAY COLD STURDY INDUSTRIAL RUSTING AGING SHELTERS HARD DOORWAYS BRITTLE BEAMS SHINY STRONG DECAY CORROSION MELTING SOFT MALLEABLE HIGH RISE SKELETONS ANGULAR CONTORTED REFINED MILITARY DESTRUCTION UNEMPLOYMENT TECHNOLOGY CAPITALISM FIRM CONFINEMENT RIGID SLAB PRISON MACHINERY BARRIER FENCE VEHICLE IRREVERSIBLE INDELIBLE RUST STAINS POWDER OLD BRIDGES BOILERS PASSING TIME

Cor Ten steel seems to be a metaphor for our collective negative feelings about our environment. The community hopes that by getting rid of the piece they can get rid of all that it symbolizes to them.

By changing the material from which the "Arc" is constructed the viewers experience would change, affirming that the violent reaction to the piece is from it's material rather than it's formal sculptural qualities. k

- First Example: "Glass Arc"
- Second Example: "Fence Arc with Tubes"
- Third Example: "Pole Arc"
- Fourth Example: "Copper Arc"
- Fifth Example: "Moss Arc"

Project Proposal: "Buried Arc" Top edge of arc exposed at ground level and oxidizing.  
Material: Cor Ten Steel

Photographs: Edward Claycomb  
Site Drawing: Glen Weiss

Sandy Gellis 1985





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## FAMOUS LAST WORDS

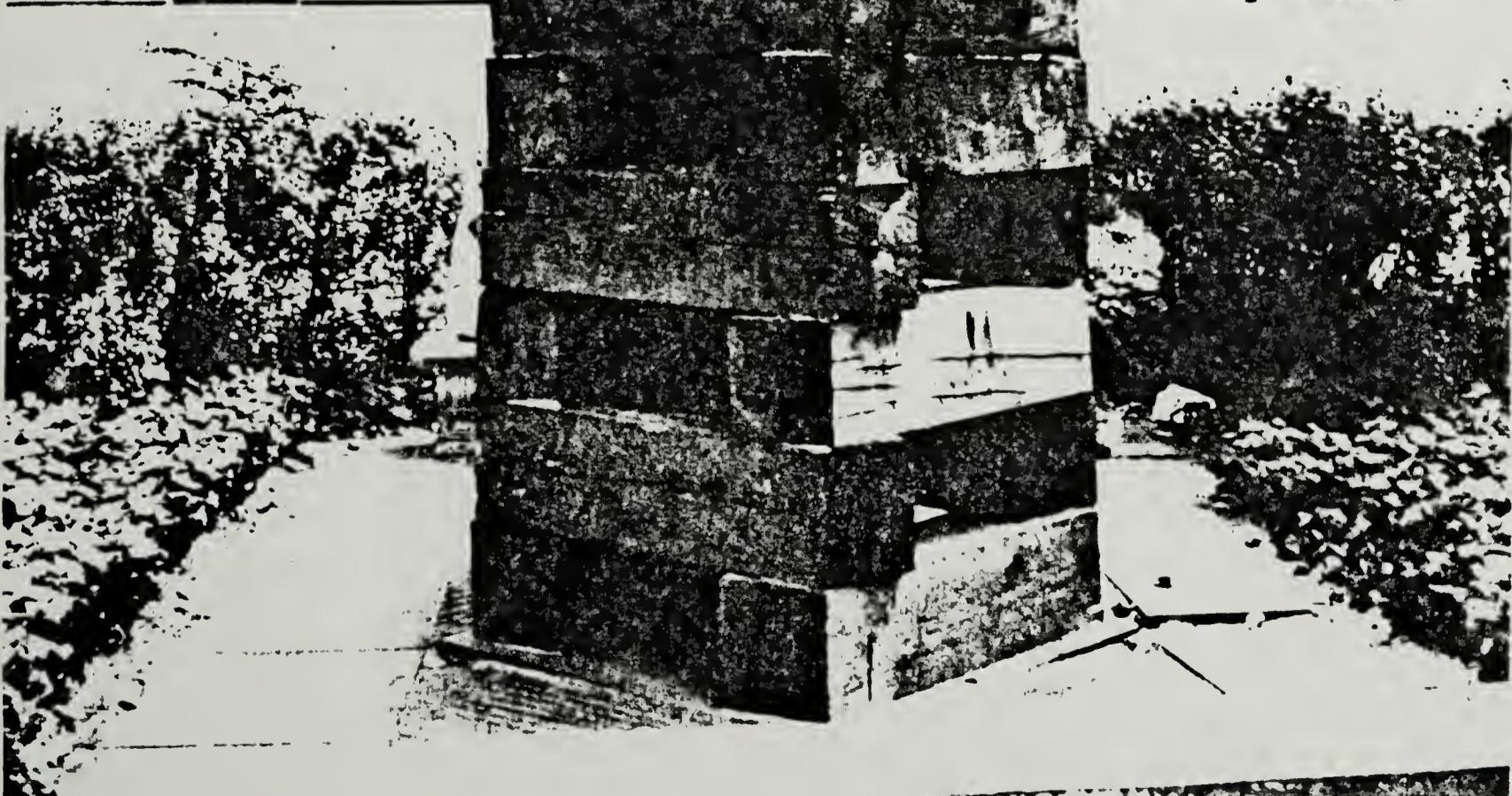
Efforts have been made by many people to do many things to "Tilted Arc". Every imaginable game has been played, every polemic laid and every reaction staged. Art has not suffered through it all, nor has it been served. Richard Serra's controversial artwork has become an entity instead of a non-entity and regardless of Serra's intent the work now has a context, enjoys a theme of sorts and looks completely different. Formalism and Modernism, frail and ailing, have been given the fatal dose because our time has no apparent need for them. Artists, by definition and by character should defend the art and everyone else should object in every way possible. This is the only sensible outcome.

Morality was a central issue at the hearing and should not have been. Ethics and morals treated as amateur sciences has no bearing on professional art. We insulted and continue to insult serious thinkers in these disciplines and I wouldn't blame them if we artists were dismissed as incompetents.

Something about this reminds me of Heizer's "Dragged Mass" and something as questionable as it's recent incarnation has resulted. All metaphors now apply to a work which denied any meaning other than itself. Serra's personality stands out as strongly as he declared it should'nt. The work is now loaded with anterior meanings. Our culture has accomplished it's goal and now since the piece has already been effectively removed, we should leave it. A monument to metaphor and to manipulations at which our society is so expert.

Scott Pfaffman  
October 31, 1985







"Proposal for Foley Square, NYC"

"Opechancanough"

Carved Poplar log with Oak base.  
Height: 13', Summer, 1983.

Commissioned by the Public Art Fund for temporary installation in Bryant Park, New York City. Carved on the site over a six week period, "Opechancanough" is one of four figures from an "American Pantheon". He was responsible for the massacre of several hundred English settlers in Jamestown. The other figures are; George and Charles Ives, Mary Baker Eddy and Malcolm X.



based on an Idea presented by Richard Serra  
to President Ronald Reagan

Sally.  
type ~~only~~ ①②③

## Serra Writes the President

Following is Richard Serra's letter to President Reagan.

President Ronald Reagan  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

(3)

MERLE LADENMAN 4/1/85

If we only provide public forums for art which is immediately gratifying and popular, we give up on art. While artists have always guarded their integrity and have persevered in the face of opposition, they also need a political environment which is supportive and a society which values their efforts.

relation to the arts, creativity, and the meaning of free expression. In this way we can begin to understand and deal with polarized responses to art.

I believe our entire educational system is deficient in this respect. Much attention ought to be given to introducing students to current developments in creative expression, as well as developments in basic science and other areas. In this way we can become a nation whose people understand the languages of contemporary thought and creativity, which respond to and define the world we live in. If the present controversy helps in realizing this, it will have exceeded my furthest expectations. ...

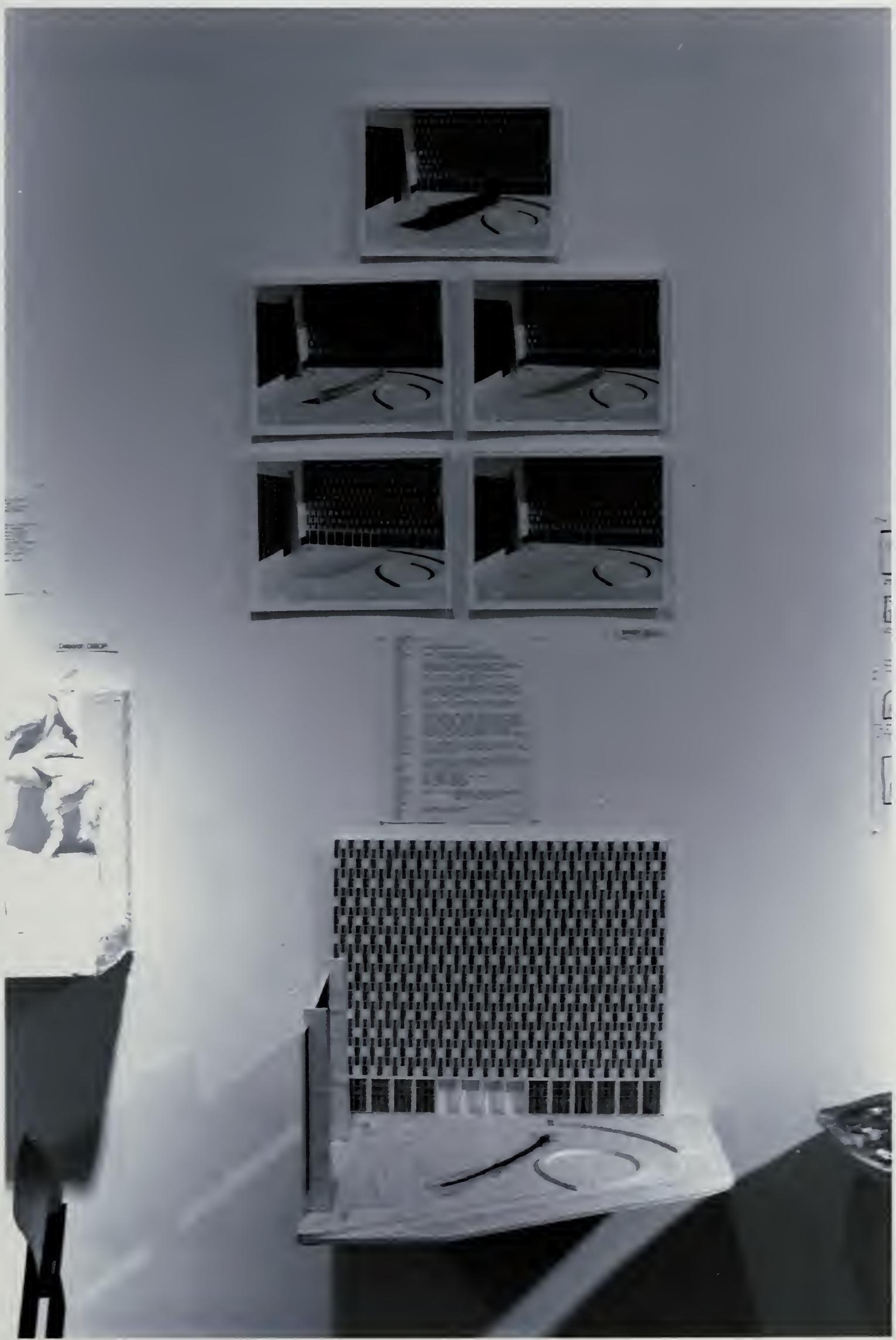
Ways ought to be explored for introducing the languages of art to the communities in which it is expressed. This could involve dialogues between those who are not very familiar with particular modes of artistic expression and those who are experts in them. More fundamentally, it means reassessing our educational institutions in

CREATORS

&  
PUBLIC

P.S. ALL SCHEDULED PARTICIPANTS, ARTISTS & CITIZENS, SHOULD BE PAID AN HONORARIUM.





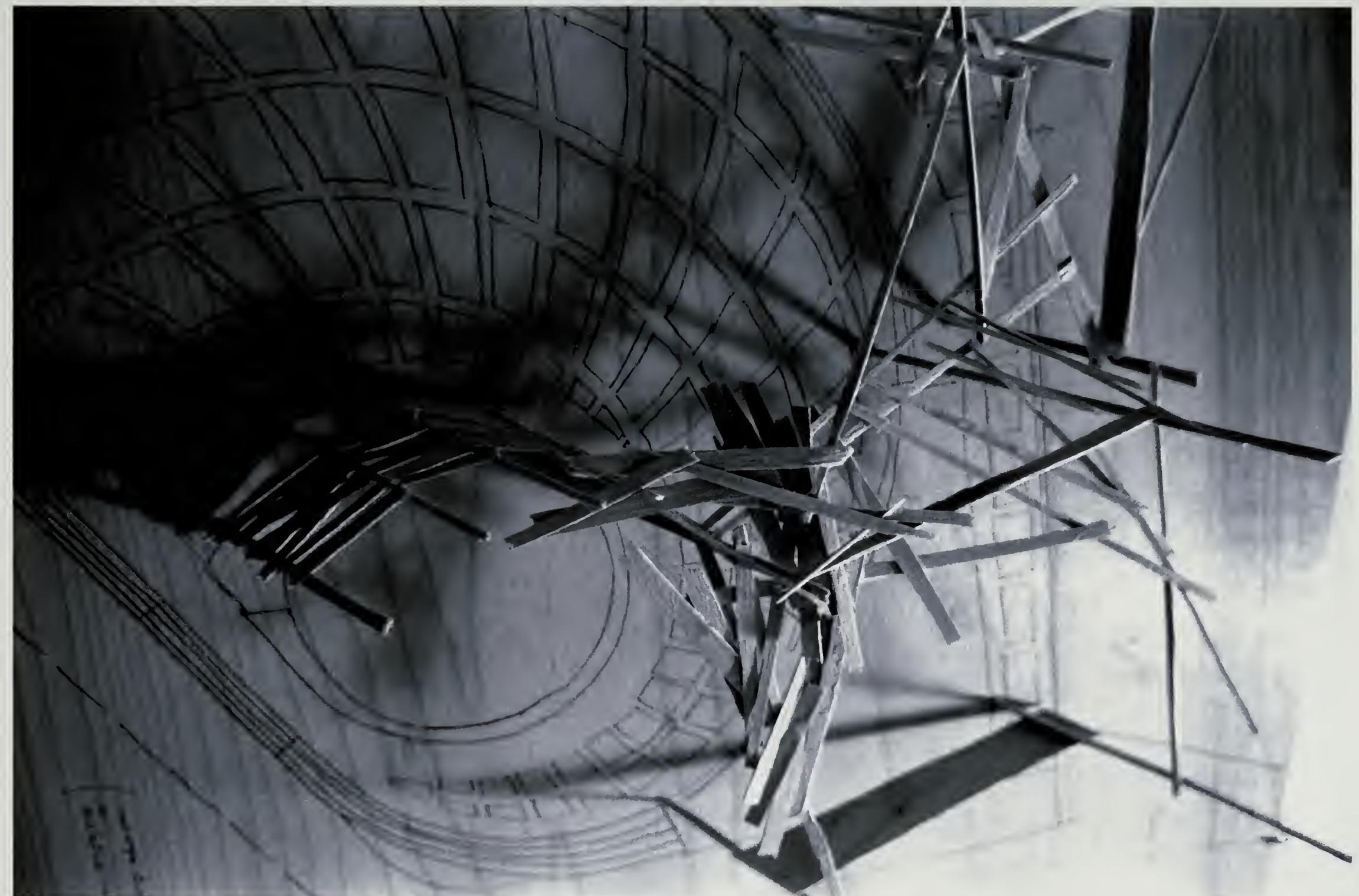














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—Leo Castelli  
West Broadway

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—Dennis O'Donnell  
Harrison Street

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He spends 30 minutes  
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to deliberate opposition

list of potential per-

—Jerald Urdover  
Sullivan Street

Dear Editor:

Upon reading Peter Schjeldahl's "Artistic Control," I  
came away with the implication that a "steel slab, pre-  
cariously balanced by Richard Serra, had fallen and killed  
a workman." In fact, one piece of steel toppled during its  
installation and it was regarded by all parties involved as  
an industrial accident, not an artistic one. The sculpture,  
of which the slab was a single part, now resides, per-  
manently installed, just outside the Museum of Fine Arts  
in Dallas and is currently stable and secure. When the  
slab fell over in Minneapolis, it was not the sculpture  
falling. It was part of it falling over during installation.

Dear Editor

Peter Schjeldahl's article emanates from  
in the polemic surrounding Richard Serra.  
For that reason, careful editing should  
shifting reference to "abstract" and "im-  
agist" sculpture. When the critic writes  
big, but it doesn't feel big. No abstract  
outdoor urban setting ever does. One is  
is referring specifically to the career of M.  
sculptor such as Mark di Suvero. His  
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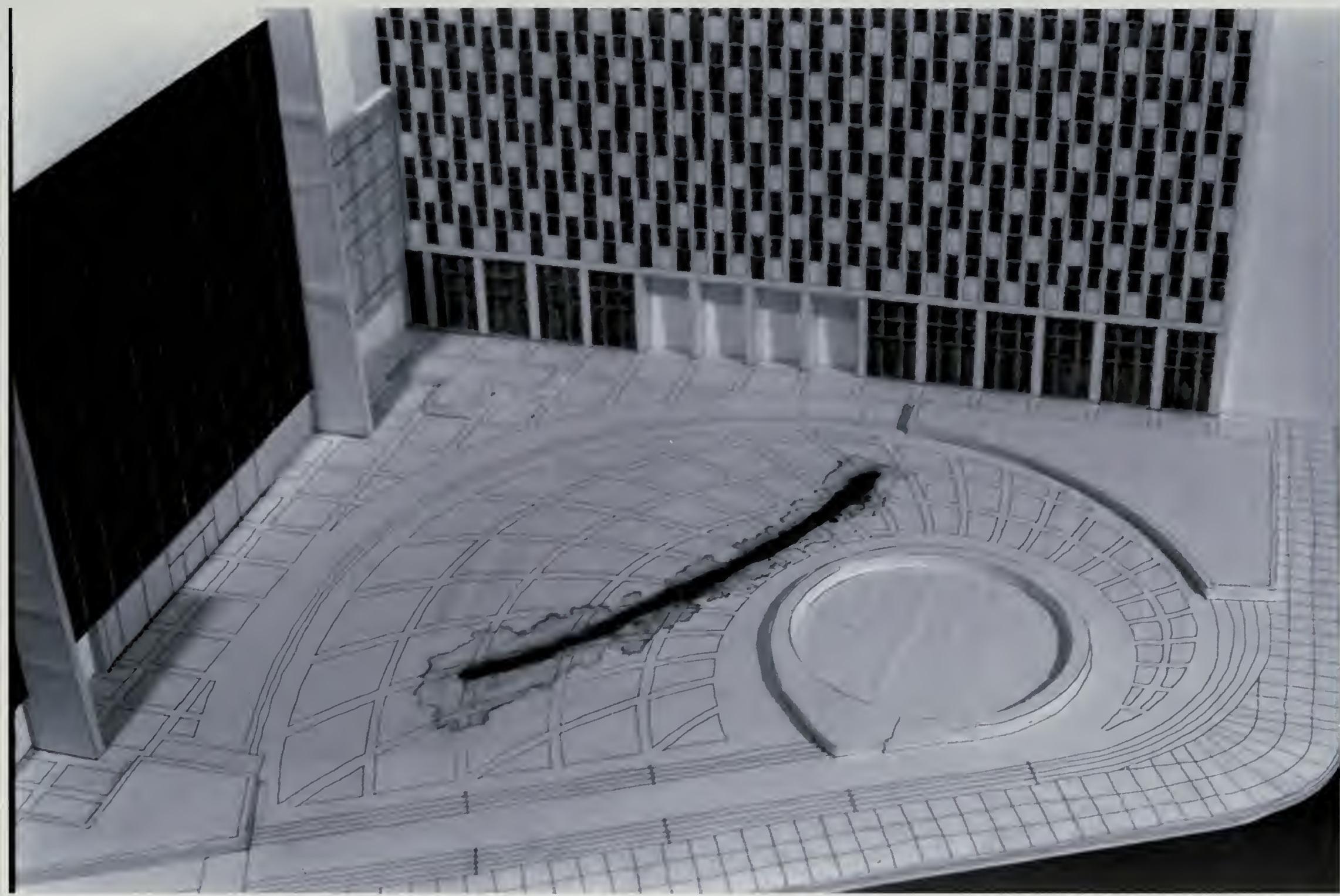
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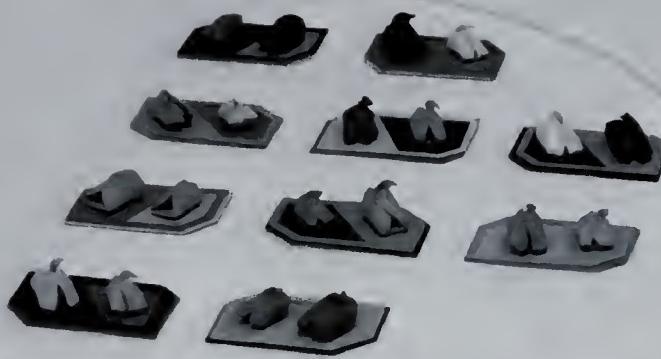
ry and I'd hear the Federal Plaza workers weren't con-  
sulted either.

→Virginia Makaymowicz  
Denton, Texas





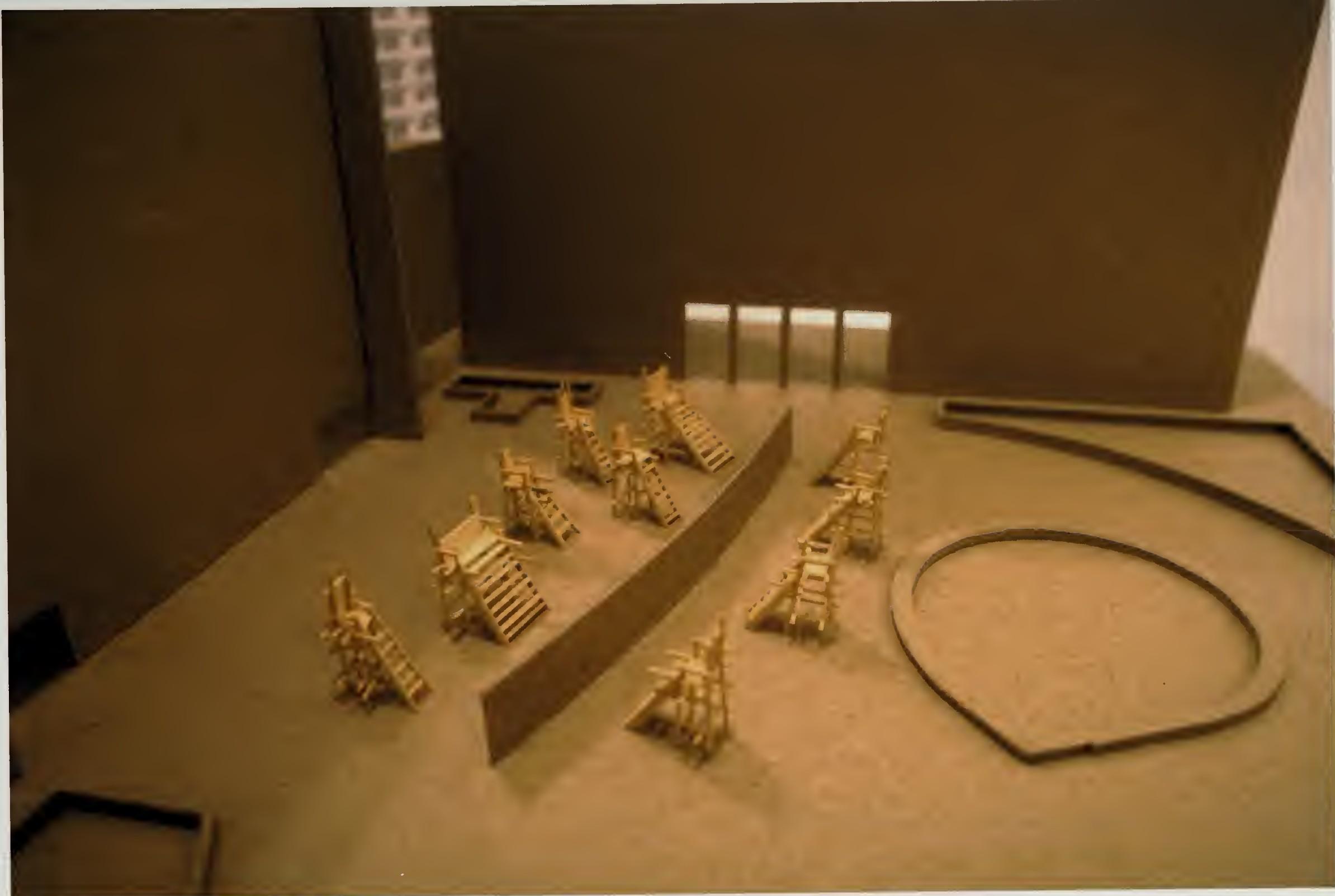








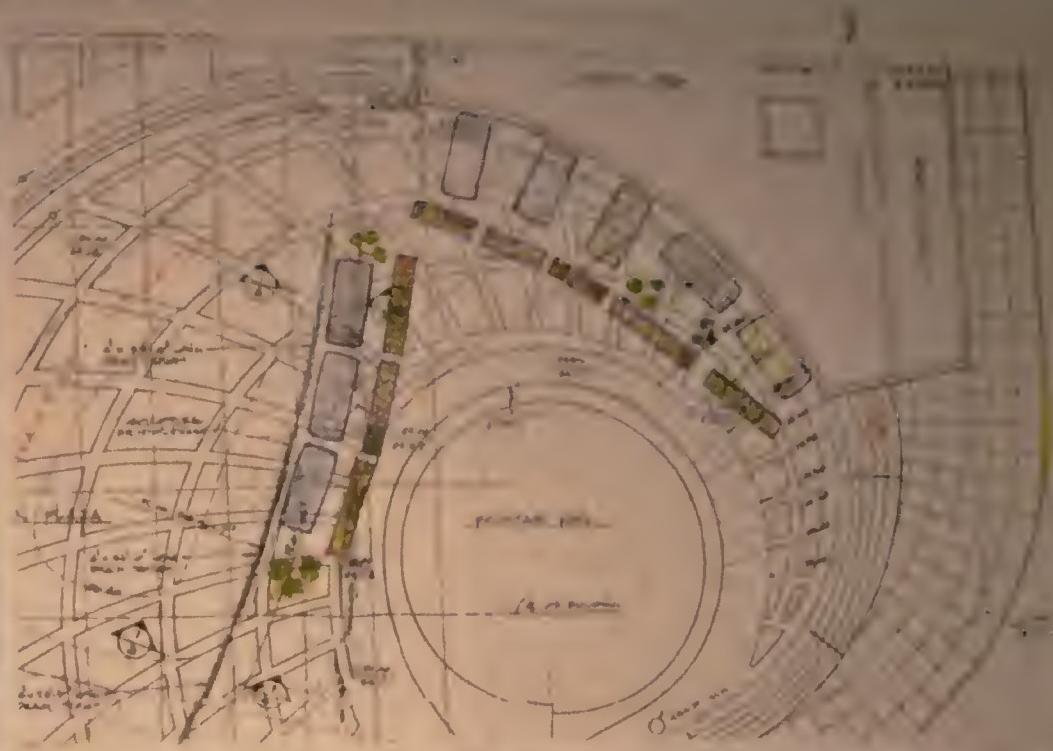












## GREENMARKET TILTS AT ARC



political activists "tilted left" and have a record of strong environmentalism from the start. This means that they are unlikely to believe that the market model is the best way to go about addressing food issues. And that's important, because it's not clear that a market model can work well in this case.

That said, the Greenmarket has a long history of success. It's a network of farmers' markets that have been around since the 1970s, and it's been successful in bringing fresh, healthy food to low-income neighborhoods across the country. The Greenmarket has also been instrumental in fighting against food deserts and improving access to healthy food in underserved areas. So, while there may be some concerns about the market model, it's important to remember that the Greenmarket has a proven track record of success and is likely to continue to do so.



85-J

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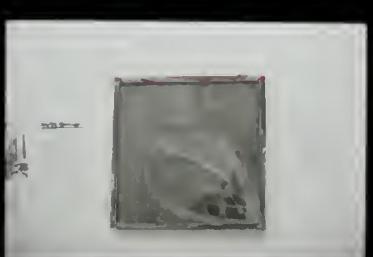


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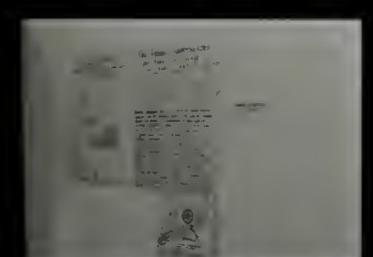
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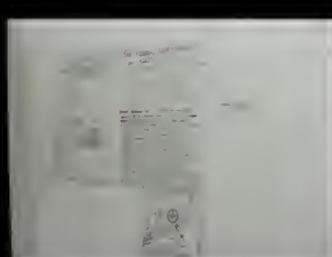


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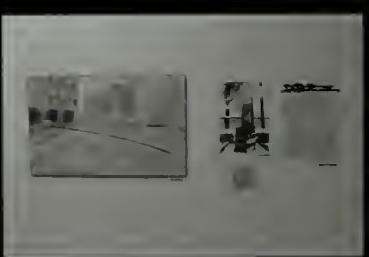
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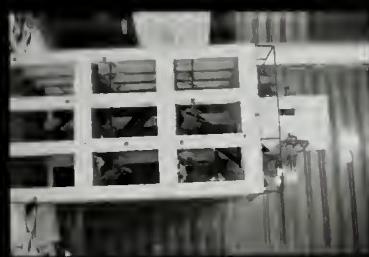
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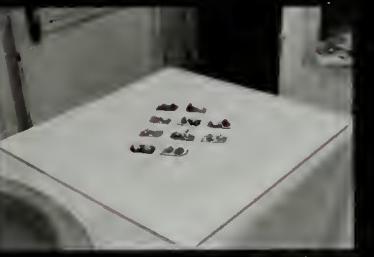


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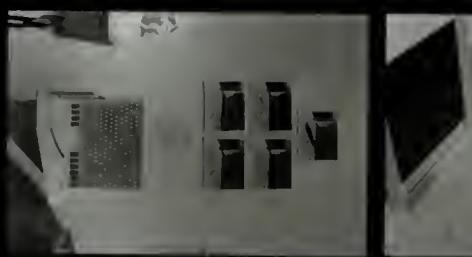
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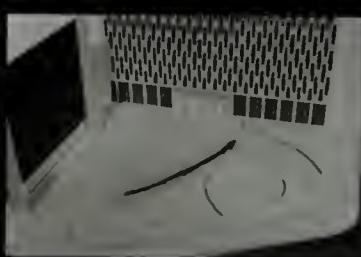
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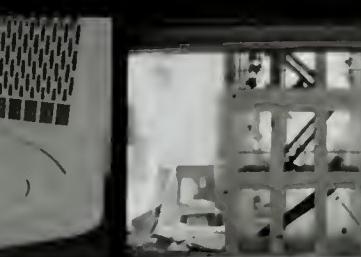
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